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ATEC EXCEL

YOUR SERVICE TRAINING GUIDE

VOL.1 NO.1

JANUARY 1994

**Bridging Service Delivery
to Customer Expectations**

**Taxicab Driver Named
'Most Professional'**

**Service Training For
1995 Canada Games**



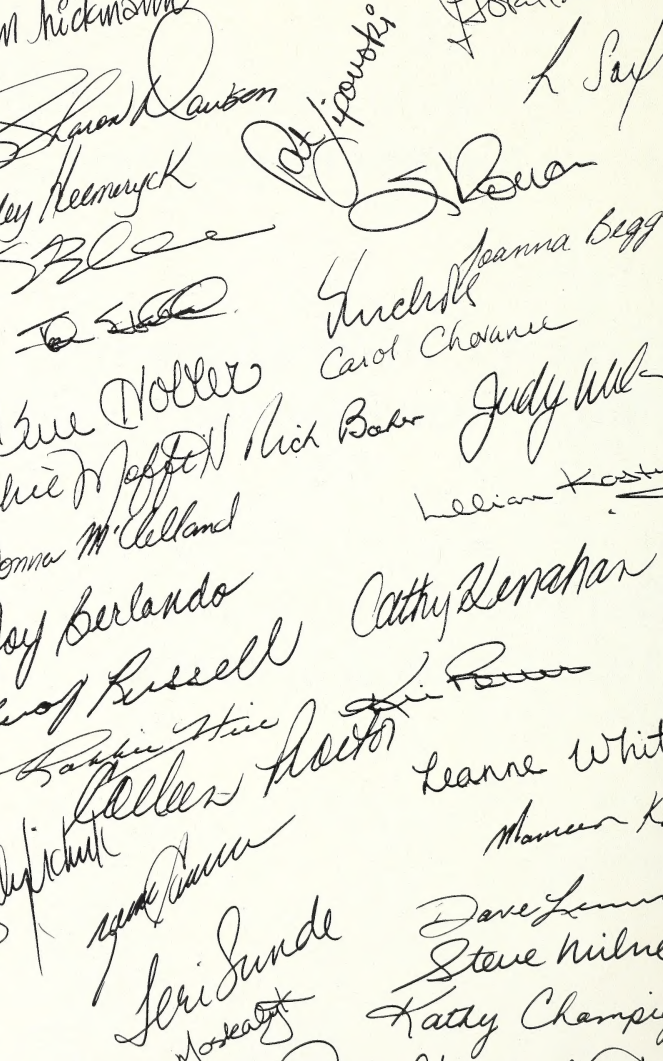
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Alberta Tourism Education Council

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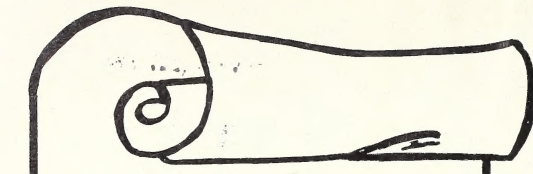
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Also a special thank you
to our Council,
committee members
and many volunteers
for their dedication
and commitment
in support
of our activities.
We are pleased
to have this
opportunity
to wish you
the best for
1994.



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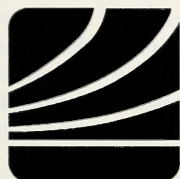


For ATEC, 1993 was an exciting year of change. New programs were introduced. Many new businesses were added to our training roster. The *Excellence Pays* theme was launched to reinforce the common goals of all our programs and services.

Now, we are introducing *ATEC EXCEL* (an expansion of the *ATEC Newsletter*) in an effort to serve you better.

To do this, we must know what you think of the publication. What would you like to see the magazine include? We invite your comments by letter or by completing the *Please Tell Us* comment section on Page 10.

Mail your suggestions and requests to:



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EXCEL

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NOTICE TO READERS:

You are welcome to reprint any of the articles in this magazine. Just call the Alberta Tourism Education Council - Phone 1-800-265-1283.

Alberta Business Named "The Best" By Customers

Sunshine Village Ski Resort near Banff took top honours in reader surveys conducted by two ski magazines.

Sunshine Village was chosen the favourite resort in Canada - seventh overall in North America - by Ski Country Magazine readers. In Ski Magazine, it scored number one for best customer service in Alberta, fourth in Canada.

Ralph Scurfield, Sunshine Village President says, "A resort is more than snow, ski lifts and buildings. It is people taking care of people."

He goes on to say that during the past few years, increased emphasis has been placed on customer service.

A revamp of the interviewing program was cited as instrumental in the hiring of some 400 service employees each season.

Using sections of the ALBERTA BEST management seminar as a guide, skills profiles focused on service aptitude have been put into practice. And behavioural interviewing techniques are being used to get a clearer picture of the attributes of the individual being interviewed. In other words, individual skills are now being more closely matched to the job requirements.

The most noticeable result of these new hiring practices is a very significant drop in staff turnover during the past two seasons - from more than 200 per cent to about 75 per cent.

As the turnover declines, so does the need to constantly train new employees. For a business like Sunshine Village, the savings can be significant because every employee must go through the Alberta Best service excellence training program.

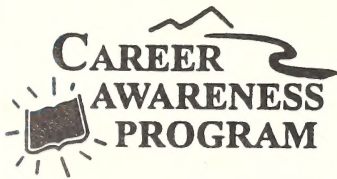
Scurfield concludes, "It is gratifying to see our efforts are paying off."

"Presentation broadened my ideas about tourism"

Corry Johnstone,
Tofield School

Tourism offers a multitude of career choices that are exciting, rewarding and sometimes surprising. There is an abundance of entry-level positions and exceptional career-path opportunities.

Discover the many career options in the world's fastest growing industry. In-school presentations and research resources are available now.



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CAREER AWARENESS is one of the service programs offered by the Alberta Tourism Education Council



Excellence Pays
Alberta Tourism Education Council

New Award To Be Introduced At Alberta Tourism Conference

The first "Reaching For The Stars II" award will be presented at the Alberta Conference On Tourism next March in Edmonton.

The new award, to be presented annually, will honour the late Don Sparrow, former Minister of Economic Development and Tourism who died in a car accident last July.

The original, a bronze sculpture titled "Reaching For The Stars", was presented to Sparrow at the 1993 Alberta Conference On Tourism to show industry appreciation of his leadership, enthusiasm and dedication.

"Don Sparrow helped our industry grow through his spirited support," says Liz Clarke, Conference Chairperson. "It seems fitting that a "Reach For The Stars II" award go to an industry person showing enthusiasm, teamwork and entrepreneurial leadership".

Selection of the winner will be made from nominations received by the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAALTA) - sponsors of the award and the upcoming conference to be held at the Westin Hotel in Edmonton, March 13 to 16.



Edmonton Taxicab Driver Named Most Professional

Michel Gariepy of Checker Cabs walked off with the top award - Most Professional Driver - at a special awards night held in conjunction with the 1993 Taxicab Driver Appreciation Week.

"Every cab driver has his chauffeur's permit, but there's a difference between a chauffeur and a cabbie", says Michel Gariepy.

For Gariepy, who has been driving for two years, demonstrating the difference paid off with a trophy, a ski trip to Banff and the title 'Most Professional Driver'.

He was one of 15 cab drivers vying for the title. The competitors, representing six brokers in Edmonton, were the first drivers in Western Canada to complete the new Taxicab Driver Certification program. Gariepy achieved the highest combined grades from a written examination and an on-the-job evaluation to win the prize.

More than 130 drivers and guests gathered in the rotunda of City Hall for the special awards presentation on October 1. Mayor Jan Reimer, representatives from the Edmonton Taxi Commission and ATEC staff were on hand to make the presentations.

Driver Certification

The new certification program is based on standards developed by a team of taxicab industry professionals in cooperation with the Alberta Tourism Education Council and western Canadian partners involved in the Tourism Standards Consortium project.

Taxicab industry professionals from four provinces devoted a total of more than

1,500 volunteer hours to the program development.

Drivers seeking professional certification must pass a written examination based on the standards, then practice the skills identified as necessary to achieve professional certification and pass an on-the-job evaluation conducted by a certified peer.

Candidates successfully completing the process receive a certificate and lapel pin designating their earned professional status.

Lasting Recognition

The lapel pin, an enamelled reproduction of the Alberta Tourism Education Council (ATEC) logo, indicates that the taxicab driver is serious about providing service. He or she has the skills, knowledge and attitude of an efficient and competent professional.

This pin is only awarded to drivers who have been certified by ATEC as having met the standards for excellence.

All drivers who complete the program, which will be available year-round, will have lasting rewards - recognition, a sense of accomplishment and the confidence that they are able to provide the highest level of service to their customers. There can also be a tangible reward in the form of better tips.

Driver Appreciation Week

In support of industry efforts to increase professionalism among drivers, Mayor Jan Reimer proclaimed September 27 to October 2 Taxicab Driver Appreciation Week. In her proclamation she noted - Edmonton taxi drivers are front-line ambassadors for visitors to the city.

(Continued on Page 4)

AT THE AWARDS NIGHT...

Top: Michel Gariepy receives award from Rick Baker of ATEC.

Right: Edmonton Mayor Jan Reimer and Hatem Naboulsi, Chairman of the Edmonton Taxi Cab Commission (lower right) with Western Canada's first certified drivers.



(Taxicab ... Cont'd)

More than 60 city cab drivers participated in a week-long series of eight events including Tourism Ambassador, Good Neighbour and City Knowledge Awards.

For the winners, the competitors, and the taxicab industry the week was a rewarding one.

"Good drivers appreciate the opportunity to have a positive impact," says Pat Walsh, the general manager of Checker Cabs (Alberta) Ltd., one of the organizers of Taxicab Driver Appreciation Week, and head of the Alberta validation committee which developed the standards for taxicab drivers. He believes the program will promote "good sound values that will

increase the quality of service and the commitment of drivers."

He also suggests that higher levels of professionalism among drivers will benefit not only the drivers and their customers, but the entire taxicab industry by enhancing its image and creating growth in ridership.

"Training ... helped us focus on customers, find out what they want, and deliver"

Rollie La Marche
Picture This Framing and Art Gallery
Sherwood Park, Alberta

Some Alberta businesses have noted improved sales after applying the principles from ALBERTA BEST service excellence seminars. These principles could work for you.

The program is becoming popular with managers from retail, government and hospitality outlets who see service excellence as a way of being more competitive.

Discover how ALBERTA BEST can help you to use superior service and gain a competitive edge for your business.

ALBERTA BEST FOR MANAGERS is a two-day seminar aimed at exploring the principles of sound service practices, such as coaching, motivating and how to create a dedicated service team.

ALBERTA BEST FOR STAFF is a one-day session dealing with real solutions to real situations in serving customers.

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ALBERTA BEST is one of the service training resources offered by ATEC



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ALBERTA BEST Named Official Training Program For 1995 Canada Games

The 1995 Canada Games Host Society has named ALBERTA BEST as the official training program for volunteers for the 1995 Canada Games in Grande Prairie.

More than 6,000 volunteers involved in staging the prestigious games will be trained to provide high quality service to the thousands of spectators who are expected to attend.

"People have been our number one asset from the beginning," says H.J. (Tom) Thompson, President of the Host Society. "The ALBERTA BEST program will provide our people with training to ensure that our customers are treated to western hospitality that is second to none. We believe excellence pays."

Twenty of the 23 Games sites are in Grande Prairie, while the remaining three are in Jasper. With large crowds anticipated, there is plenty of opportunity to provide quality service.

Whether it's a case of lost tickets or long line-ups at food outlets, volunteers will be fully prepared to cope with problems and turn any situation into a positive encounter.

Seminar Customized

An intensive one-day ALBERTA BEST seminar will be customized to meet the special requirements of the Games,

which are being held from February 19 to March 4, 1995.

Service Recovery, an integral and popular unit in all ALBERTA BEST seminars, will provide volunteers with

A UNIQUE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

an easy formula to respond to any situation likely to occur during the Games.

Through interactive problem-solving, the Ambassador unit of the seminar combines service excellence with general awareness of areas, venues and events of interest to non-residents. This information goes into the production of a "Pride Guide" that participants create to prepare them for any question from a visitor.

Every volunteer in the seminar will receive specially-prepared, tourist-focused information on Grande Prairie,

Game Country tourism zone and the Jasper area. This information also forms part of their individual "Pride Guide".

Student Participation

For some students in two Grande Prairie high schools, the Games provide a rare and exciting opportunity. Those registered in the new Tourism Curriculum will receive ALBERTA BEST training as part of their course of studies.

All students are being encouraged to become involved as Games volunteers and experience the functional side of presenting a world-class tourism event.

Donna Koch, Director of Volunteer Services for the Games, is very pleased about the ALBERTA BEST volunteer training program.

"This kind of quality training," she says, "will continue to benefit our community in many ways long after the Games have closed."



TRAINING BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN SERVICE DELIVERY & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

More and more Alberta businesses are placing increased emphasis on service standards to capture a greater share of the market and ultimately increased profits.

There's no magic to providing good service. It's simply a matter of applying the right skills. Most employers recognize that. What they don't always recognize, however, is the vital role that training plays in the acquisition of those skills.

By and large, the best employees - and managers - are trained, not born. For them, training is the key to consistent, professional performance that means happier customers, increased sales and subsequently more profits.

The Training Link

A Citycorp Survey of Service and Customer Satisfaction Excellence shows the direct link between training and good service. Seventeen companies which were the leaders in providing customer

service all made major investments in training - often one or two per cent of gross sales. In companies providing superior service, almost everyone received a full week of training every year.

Management Training

Without training, even the best-intentioned managers have difficulty knowing what should be done to improve service. For example, a 1992 survey shows 88 per cent of Alberta's tourism owners and managers believe that providing good service is management's primary responsibility. But when they were asked what they could do to improve customer service, more than 60 per cent came up with non-management responses such as "Smile" or "Be friendly."

Obviously, a smile is better than nothing, but it takes more than a good attitude to deliver excellent service. It takes skills

and commitment on the part of management.

"Training does not end with the customer contact person," say Richard S. Wellins and Patterson S. Weaver in *Ten Myths of Customer Service*. "Supervisors and managers must be trained to model, coach and reinforce the skills they expect their subordinates to perform. Without this active support, training customer service people is a risky investment."

Reducing Staff Turnover

Even with active support, some owners and managers regard training as a risky investment because of staff turnover. There's no doubt that the turnover tends to be high in tourism-related businesses, but it's also true that training is one of the best ways to reduce it.

A recent survey by the Canadian Tourism Research Institute and the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development showed

"A very high number - 50% - of our seasonal staff return each year and that's due to training!"

Sam Halabi
Park Ranger

"Our word-of-mouth advertising has increased with trained staff - 30% of our business is from happy customers spreading the word."

Dennis Potter
Outfitter

"We're still in business after 10 years of training."

As



EXPECTATIONS

Good Service, Like Beauty, Is In The Eye of the Beholder

that tourism businesses which had invested in training had a 76 per cent reduction in staff turnover.

Over the long haul, reducing turnover also decreases the inconvenience, expense and time involved in constantly training new employees.

A significant reduction in staff turnover isn't the only benefit. Effective training also results in more and better job applicants, greater staff commitment and morale, and improved productivity and flexibility.

In other words, a well-trained employee will probably be a loyal, efficient and happy employee.

Superior service, firmly based on knowledge and skills, means more attention is paid to customer needs. This results in more sales, return visits and referrals - adding up to a larger market share and increased profits.

Albertans in the tourism industry generally believe they provide good service.

A 1992 survey by Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation found that 93 per cent of owners and managers think their service is good. Twenty-six per cent said their service is excellent.

Ninety-seven per cent of employees believe the service they personally provide is excellent.

But when the survey asked members of the public to rate the level of service they encountered in Alberta, just 69 per cent said it was good. Only 11 per cent thought they received excellent service.

And what about the customers who weren't satisfied with the service they received at a particular business? They probably didn't complain -- an estimated 96 per cent of dissatisfied customers don't -- but it's unlikely that they will go back to the offending establishment. If they are typical, they will also describe their bad experience to at least nine other people.

That translates into a significant loss of revenue for individual businesses.

According to a 1990 report in the Harvard Business Review, it costs five times as much to replace a lost customer as it does to maintain a loyal one.

Employees also suffer, since their well-being is linked to the success of their employer.

In fact, the entire economy suffers. Tourism is one of Alberta's leading industries. It employs about 100,000 people on a full and part-time basis, and in 1992 generated \$2.91 billion in business.

Even a small gain or loss in revenue because of service means millions of dollars to the industry and the economy of the province.

**97%
OF SERVICE
EMPLOYEES
PERSONALLY
FEEL
THEY
PROVIDE
EXCELLENT
SERVICE**

"Training results? For us, it's repeat business up by 50%."

*Chico Narayan
Assistant Executive Manager*

cause

MacNeil
Manager



**11% OF
ALBERTANS
FEEL
THEY
RECEIVE
EXCELLENT
SERVICE**

11%

Don Sparrow Memorial Fund Helps AHA Members Finance Service Training

In honour of the late Don Sparrow, former Minister of Alberta Economic Development and Tourism, the Alberta Hotel Association (AHA) has established the AHA "Don Sparrow Memorial Scholarship Fund. Through this plan, the association will contribute a portion of the fees for members' employees seeking professional certification from the Alberta Tourism Education Council.

It is a fitting tribute, Dick Fulks, President of the Alberta Hotel Association explains, "Don Sparrow was a very good friend and supporter of our industry."

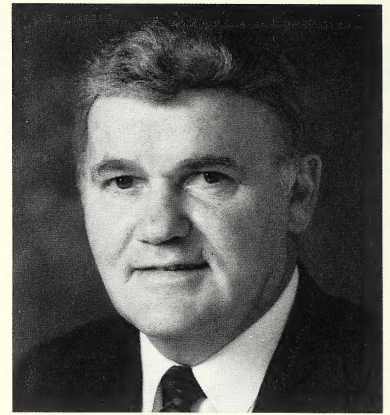
"It's appropriate that his legacy will live on through the accomplishments of people working to provide superior service to visitors," he says.

Through the AHA "Don Sparrow Memorial" Scholarship Fund, (formerly the Tourism Employee Recognition Program), the association will pay one-third of the certification fee. To qualify, the AHA member employer and the employee each agree to pay one-third. The employee must have worked for the employer for at least one year.

The most popular occupations are Food and Beverage Server, Front Desk Agent and Housekeeping Room Attendant.

Certification is also available for other occupations such as: Bartender, Sales Manager, Host/Hostess and Guest Services Attendant.

Director of Sales and Marketing and



Beverage Services Manager certification is available to employees with certain requisites. Certified Food and Beverage Servers can elevate their professional status by seeking certification as a Wine Steward or a Maitre d'.

"TRC videos are a very cost-effective training tool"

Tom Gallagher,
Mylnoft Food Services Management
Calgary, Alberta

Videos are becoming more popular with business operators as part of in-house training, to supplement formal studies, and for some, casual viewing during staff breaks.

Whether it's business tips from the world's top executives or practical instruction on how to clean a guest room, the Training Resource Centre at ATEC is a practical and cost-effective way to access training videos.

The TRC houses more than 250 videos (the largest collection in Canada) available to members for an annual fee.



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Program Builds Confidence

Fay Winkler was less than enthusiastic when her boss announced that the housekeeping staff at the Lethbridge Lodge had been signed up for ATEC's standards and certification program.

Winkler had never liked school all that much, tests made her nervous, and her non-working hours were taken up with family. And after putting in nearly 15 years of housekeeping duties at the hotel, Winkler figured the last thing she needed was more training. "If I was not good," she reasoned, "I should have been gone."

But she took the course anyway - as a supervisor herself, it wouldn't have looked good if she had not. And, as befits a supervisor, she passed her written exam with 96 out of 100. The evaluator who observed Winkler on the job was so impressed with her skills that she said, "I can't see anything that you could improve on. Everything looks great."

Indeed, the whole housekeeping staff at the 191-room hotel "passed with flying colors," says Winkler, who believes that the standards and certification program is especially useful for those who are starting out in the business.

Still, Winkler learned useful information, mostly about fire, safety and cleaning chemicals. And perhaps most important, the course taught her something she'd suspected all along - that she was doing a good job.

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HOW TO USE TRAINING TO INCREASE YOUR PROFITS

Step One: Decide What Your Training Needs Are

Job training for Alberta's tourism industry comes in many shapes, sizes and price ranges - from renting a video about communications skills to hiring consultants who will develop a fully customized program.

Before choosing any training program, take some time to consider the needs of your business and the options available. And remember, there's no such thing as a 'quick-fix' - shortcuts don't exist.

Employees' needs and tasks vary greatly in the tourism industry, even within the same small company. To get the best value for your training dollar, some careful thought should be given to finding the best solution to your training needs.



Where To Start

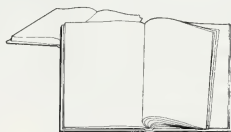
Your first step is to decide what you want to achieve through training. This is the only way to be sure that the training program you choose is what you need and want.

Service employees need a combination of product knowledge, occupational skills and a positive attitude if they are to do their best. This certainly applies to front-line staff, but is equally important to those behind

the scenes who can affect the performance of employees who actually meet the customer.

Take a long, hard look at your operation. Ask yourself if your employees meet the standards you have set for your business. Be sure your standards are high enough to ensure success in the competitive tourism industry.

Try to see your business and your employees as your customers see them after checking your operation. List your observations, along with any changes you want to make and the results you expect through training.



Employee Involvement

Enlist the help of your employees from the beginning in identifying training needs and learning styles. The more you involve them, the more effective the training will be.

If your staff do not like to read, for example, there's no point in providing training solely based on written material. Programs using classroom instruction, demonstration or videotapes will be much more effective.

Setting The Stage

Check opportunities when assessing the training needs of your employees. Be mindful of the many training opportunities

available to managers and supervisors in the tourism industry.

By taking advantage of these opportunities, you not only enhance your own skills and knowledge, but also send a strong message to your employers about your personal commitment to training as a means of providing better service.

The time and care you take to draw up a list of training needs will be amply rewarded. A good training program can result in improved employee performance, increased customer satisfaction and in the long run greater profits.



Moving to Step Two

Once you have determined what results you expect from a training program, you are ready for step two - a look at the many options available. Your choice will depend on the type of training you require, your resources and individual learning styles.

More information on the second step in the How to Use Training To Increase Your Profits series will appear in the next issue of ATEC EXCEL.

New AHA Program To Help With Certification For Food and Beverage Servers

The Alberta Hotel Association (AHA) is developing a two-fold program to make it easier for food and beverage servers to receive training and to achieve professional certification through the Alberta Tourism Education Council (ATEC).

The new Food and Beverage Server Workbook, based on ATEC standards, will provide step-by-step instructions and practice activities to help servers master the skills necessary for certification.

For food service supervisors, a special train-the-trainer course will be offered through the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (S.A.I.T.). The program (22 hours in class plus guided home study) will focus on how to use the workbook

and ATEC standards to train staff and prepare them for professional certification.

Meeting Industry Needs

"Both the workbook and the train-the-trainer program are needed to help improve food service in Alberta hotels," says Jim Hansen, Executive Vice-President of the AHA.

He explains that some members have servers who find the ATEC process difficult without support. And feels the workbook would be the first step in simplifying the process.

In addition, Hansen explains, "Many supervisors in the hotel industry do not have a training background. The train-

the-trainer program will give them the skills they need to support staff training".

More Professional Service

Food and beverage servers, who have worked through the workbook, can become certified by ATEC after they successfully pass a written examination and on-the-job evaluation.

The workbook is in the final stages now and will be tested in a train-the-trainer pilot project to be conducted by S.A.I.T. this month.

When revisions are complete, both the workbook and the train-the-trainer program will be available throughout the province.

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"Excellence In Action" Workshop Draws 90 Participants - Provides Direction

Challenges facing the tourism industry were examined at an "Excellence In Action" Workshop held in Banff October 25 and 26.

Ninety representatives from industry, education and government participated in the two-day event, which focused on the importance of training and education in tourism.

Panellists and small groups of participants discussed three primary topics - awareness, delivery and resources.

Identified as the top priorities were the need for industry to "buy-in" to training and education and the development of an overall human resources plan.

And there was general agreement on the need for improvement in several areas,

including promotion of the tourism industry and tourism career options.

Participants also supported development of a comprehensive model for tourism training and education.

As well, they agreed there should be increased self-sufficiency of the funding for tourism training and education.

Industry representatives felt strongly that educators should deliver programs that are cost effective, relevant and affordable.

Educators, on the other hand, wanted assurances from tourism business operators that they will use any training programs that are developed.

An action plan has been prepared to achieve the objectives stated at the

workshop. The plan will be implemented in the coming months.

The workshop was organized by the Alberta Tourism Education Council (ATEC), following a series of meetings between ATEC representatives and post-secondary educators.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Stephen Murgatroyd, consultant and lecturer, who spoke on "Challenging the Paradigms of Tourism Education."

Panel moderator Mike Miller, Director of Human Resources and Labour Relations for Canadian Regional Airlines Ltd., called the workshop a valuable exercise in networking.

"It brought together tourism partners and helped us get a better understanding of viewpoints. We also discovered our many common interests in the tourism field."

Another participant, Sheri Heller, of Lakeland College, said the workshop served to remind participants of the need to maintain communication, cooperation and coordination among ATEC partners.

"We can accomplish so much more when we all work together," she said. "The team spirit really pays off."



AT THE WORKSHOP:

Above: Workshop panellists Joseph Klein, Keith Carson, Karen MacKinnon and Ed Kozakewich.

Right: Participants attended three panel presentations during the two-day session.



Certification A Condition Of Employment

Don't bother applying for a dining-room job at The Carvery in Edmonton unless you're planning to go through ATEC's standards and certification program.

Manager Brian Welsh is so sold on the program that he'll only hire people who have been certified or are at least registered.

"It shows a commitment," he says. "I feel that once they've accomplished it, it lends them a bit more self-esteem - they're not just doing a job; it can be a career."

Welsh, a former food and beverage server himself, says "there's a certain amount of dignity in the job" and that the program helps to bring that out by reinforcing basic training and information to improve a server's skills and attitude."

Certified Carvery servers earn an extra 40 cents per hour, a worthwhile investment because they usually generate more business; the extra training enables them to act not only as servers, but as salespeople, which translates into bigger dining room tabs.

"Anyone can carry a plate," Welsh says, "but if you carry a plate with a smile on your face and a positive attitude, you're probably going to make some money as a waiter."

"... having certified staff reduces turnover and staff is more motivated"



Carole Friesen
Owner/Manager
Carole's Cafe and Bar
Lethbridge, Alberta

Manager of the Carvery in Edmonton. "The extra training enables them to act not only as servers, but as sales people, which translates to bigger tabs." And better tips for employees.

A reduction in staff turnover is one of the many rewards for businesses using the ATEC Certification program.

Keeping trained employees provides the consistent, professional performance that good-service reputations are built on. There are fewer complaints, less time wasted and long-term savings on training new staff.

For the customer, each encounter is a pleasant one..prompting return visits, referrals and additional sales.

"Certified servers usually generate more business," says Brian Welsh,

In the tourism-industry, many employees work irregular hours. For them, the Certification program is an opportunity to achieve professional recognition while working.

The program uses occupational standards developed with industry professionals to clearly define the knowledge, skills and attitude

required for Certification in an occupation. Candidates review these standards, write an exam and pass an on-the-job performance evaluation.

On completion of the program, successful employees receive a lapel pin and certificate to acknowledge their professional status.

"Certification not only gave me recognition as a professional," says Arnold Banke, certified food and beverage server, "it also opened up new possibilities for advancement."

ATEC offers Certification for 14 occupations. Discover how the program can work for you...to increase sales, decrease operating costs and make a difference to your profit picture.

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"The Customer Who Complains Is My Best Friend"

Stew Leonard

Stew Leonard, the grocery guru from Norwalk, Connecticut believes what he says - and practices what he preaches. His single store does 10 times more volume in sales per square foot than the average grocery store.

Why? He and his staff stay in tune with their customers. How? Through personal

contact and consumer focus groups they track customer response to products and services. A huge suggestion box is emptied each morning, every entry is logged and most are acted upon the same day. In other words, they find out what their customers want. Then, they do it.

With this business philosophy, it's little wonder Leonard considers the customer

who complains his best friend.

Research shows us that for each customer who complains, there are 24 dissatisfied ones who simply walk away.

To her credit, Kazuhisa Inoue (a tourist from Japan) told her story in the following letter to the Red Deer Advocate.

Store's manager, staff don't serve tourists

I am a tourist visiting from Japan, and I would like to express my concerns about some of my experiences in this land.

Fortunately, most of my experiences have been wonderful, but one time I came across a bad situation.

I went to a grocery store in Red Deer on Canada Day to purchase a small amount of goods, but I only had traveller's cheques with me. The manager explained to me that I could cash only one \$50 cheque at this store, although I wished to cash two.

He explained to me that their policy prohibits them from cashing traveller's cheques unless something is purchased.

With this he told me I could sign another one and cash it tomorrow.

The next day when I went to purchase a small amount of goods and use my other traveller's cheque, I was refused.

When he refused my money, he said: "This is not the Real Canadian Bank."

He then told me that in order to cash this cheque I must spend at least 50 per cent of it due to the store's policy. I then asked for the manager's name, which he would not tell me.

Disappointed, I went to a bank where they were very

happy to cash it for me. The manager at the bank also told me that the store had no right to refuse my traveller's cheque, because it is the same as cash.

I then went back to the grocery store and found the person I had spoken with wasn't even the real manager.

When the assistant manager came to speak with me he advised me that I must purchase 50 per cent of the cheque at his store, but by the end of our conversation the assistant manager told me that I must spend 10 per cent of the cheque at the store.

I was now very confused so I asked to see a copy of this policy. I was told there is no policy. By this time I was very upset, confused, and disappointed because near the end of our conversation the self-professed manager was also very upset and came very close to me, as if to accost me.

Fortunately the real assistant manager physically pulled him back. There were also some words said to me that were more inappropriate than the whole situation.

I left the store disappointed and also curious about how many others got treated so disrespectfully.

I understand that tourism is Canada's number one resource, so with this experience I can see why Canada is in a recession.

Kazuhisa Inoue, Calgary

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Red Deer, Alberta, August 5, 1993

"ATEC training had a dramatic impact on our sales."

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Charlene White,
Hotel General Manager

Training pays in so many ways - from the customers who return and "spread the word" to the increased morale and dedication of staff, as well as financial results. ATEC training meets the needs of large or small business in an era when service excellence is the foundation of success.

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